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THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

National Intelligence Officers

24 August 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director for Central Intelligence
Deputy Director for Central Intelligence

VIA: Bruce C. Clarke, Jr.
Deputy Director for National Foreign Assessment

Richard Lehman
National Intelligence Officer for Warning

FROM: [REDACTED] 25X1
Assistant National Intelligence Officer for USSR-EE

SUBJECT: Monthly Warning Assessment: USSR-EE

Summary

Community analysts in the 21 August meeting focused their attention on political and military deterioration of the Soviet-backed Taraki regime's position in Afghanistan, and concluded that Moscow probably regards the situation with a new sense of urgency. The majority of analysts continue to believe, however, that the Soviets are unlikely to respond with direct intervention with combat units. On the second topic of discussion, the Sino-Soviet situation, the analysts agreed that forthcoming bilateral talks, assuming they start in September, are unlikely to improve the relationship significantly.

1. Afghanistan: The position of the Taraki government has continued to deteriorate politically and militarily during the last month. The August 5 rebellion of some troops in the Kabul garrison, the assumption of a more direct Soviet role in Afghani military decisions, and reports of military successes by disparate groups of insurgents (an indication of qualitative, if gradual, changes) again raise serious questions about the Soviet-backed Taraki regime's ability to weather the protracted crisis and restore political stability. [REDACTED] 25X1

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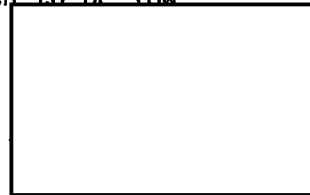
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[] the redeployment of at least two Afghan battalions to Kabul, and a sharp increase in Soviet AN-22 air transport activity which suggest more logistics and supply difficulties on the ground, contribute to the view of most analysts present that a Soviet decision on how to respond has become more urgent. The majority of analysts continue to feel that the deteriorating situation does not necessarily presage an escalation of Soviet military involvement in the form of a direct combat role. The consensus was that while this should be regarded as a possibility, the more likely course of Soviet military action -- assuming Taraki is able to continue in power -- is the accelerated infusion of advisory, equipment and logistics support. ^{25X1}

2. Sino-Soviet Situation: Assuming the scheduled September discussions between Soviet and Chinese representatives aimed at improving the relationship take place, the consensus continues to reflect doubt that major improvements in the relationship will result from the talks. Despite signs that some new Chinese reinforcement of the Vietnamese frontier may be planned, Community analysts consider the possibility of Sino-Vietnamese conflict in the next month to be low.

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